

Chapter Sixteen

Setting Limits: Our Actions

Action Signals Commitment

Focus on Action

Thoughts are free and talk is cheap, but action will cost you. Something has to be important to be "worth your time." Action, therefore, signals *commitment*.

In the preceding two chapters we focused on our response to one of the most typical classroom disruptions, *talking to neighbors*. We dealt with our *emotions* as we learned to relax in the face of provocation, and we dealt with our *thoughts* as we learned the importance of consistency.

In this chapter we will examine our *actions* as we continue to manage our prototypical disruption, *talking to neighbors*. In fol-

lowing chapters we will describe the handling of student escalations all the way to nasty backtalk and beyond.

Focus on Body Language

During our initial observations of the "natural teachers," we could not see what they were doing. It was so subtle that it was invisible to us. Nor were the naturals aware of what they were doing. They could not begin to describe it.

Only after months of observation, hours of brainstorming, and considerable trial and error did *Meaning Business* become visible to us. Yet, it was always visible to the students. They had been reading it since early childhood. *Meaning Business* is conveyed primarily through *body language*.

Preview

- We instinctively read each other's body language in order to predict what the other person is going to do next.
- Body language "telegraphs" our real thoughts, feelings, and intentions whether we want it to or not. The students read us like a book.
- Since we telegraph our intentions, the students are really reading our *minds*. They usually know what we are going to do before we do it.
- Our priority at all times is that discipline comes before instruction. Until this issue is resolved in our minds, our body language will betray our ambivalence.
- In this chapter, we examine the body language of *Meaning Business* – the signals by which students know whether or not they need to take us seriously.

Body Language Is Genetic and Generic

The whole human race speaks the same body language. Happiness, sadness, anger, and boredom look the same on any continent. The cultural differences in body language are trivial compared to the similarities.

Such uniformity of behavior can only come from its being "inborn." Body language is biology. It is "human nature."

We will bring body language to a conscious level so we can use it as a tool for helping students to succeed. In this chapter we will begin to decode that language.

Decoding Body Language***Body Language Conveys Emotion***

Long before children have speech, their eyes follow us and study us. They read our emotions. They know whether we are calm or upset, happy or sad, pleased or displeased.

We never lose that capacity. We can read the body language of our friends and loved ones and know immediately how they feel. We can tell by the facial expression, the posture, the way they walk.

Body Language Conveys Intention

We also read body language in order to know what other people will do next. One of the most common examples is sports. The offense reads the defense, and the defense reads the offense. What is the other player going to do next? Subtle signs tip us off.

Imagine, for example, a basketball player catching a pass and throwing the ball to a teammate. The player who catches the ball, however, immediately looks at the teammate for whom the pass is intended.

Can you imagine where the ball is going to go? So can the defense. In the second that it takes the player to turn and release the ball, do you think a defender can get a hand up in the passing lane?

The coach says, "You *telegraphed* your pass!" More than anything, body language "telegraphs" what we are going to do next.

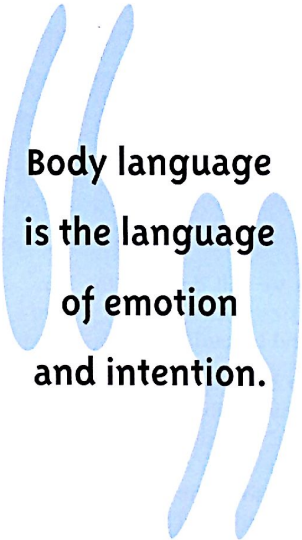
Consequently, students in the classroom are not simply reading your body language. They are reading your *mind*. They usually know what you are going to do before you do it.

Body Language Conveys Change

Body language signals *change* in people's emotions and intentions. How can you tell that a friend is sad today? We pick up signs of change. Is it the sagging posture, the downcast eyes?

These signs have a name in learning theory. Since they are stimuli that help us discriminate change, they are called *discriminative stimuli*.

Within the context of Meaning Business, how can the students discriminate that, in response to seeing a disruption, your commitment has changed from *instruction* to *discipline*? They will study your body language for clues.



**Body language
is the language
of emotion
and intention.**

Signal Clarity

Here is how it works. If all of the signals that you give say, "I am *done* with instruction, and I have *gone* to discipline," then even your dog and cat can read it. If, on the other hand, half of your signals say, "I have gone to discipline," and half of your signals say, "I am still at instruction," then no one could be sure of your intention.

When behavioral boundaries are unclear, children *test* to find out where the boundaries lie. By lack of clarity you have obligated the students to test you.

As you can see, it all comes down to *signal clarity*. If you want the disruptive students to "shape up" when you first respond to their goofing off, you'd better give clear signals. Within the context of Meaning Business, signal clarity brings us to the topic of *ambivalence*.

Ambivalence

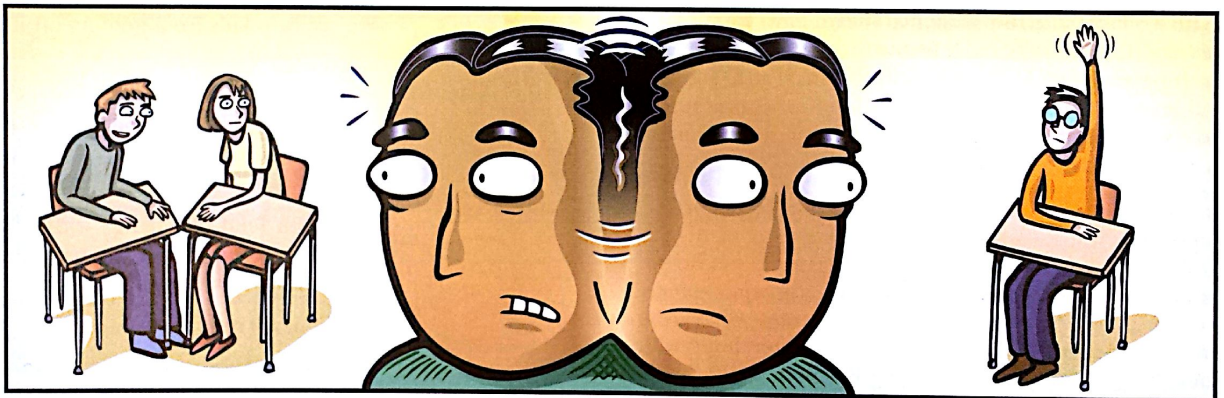
When we are ambivalent we are "of two minds." We are *torn* between two conflicting choices.

What are the two choices that confront any teacher when it is time to mean business? It is always the choice between *discipline* and *instruction*. Which one is worth your time?

Mixed Messages

If you are ambivalent – of two minds – your body language will signal *both* states of mind. When you signal two messages at the same time, you send a "mixed message." Mixed messages represent the body language of *ambivalence*.

What choice causes teachers to be ambivalent when allocating their time and energy in the classroom? As



*When we are ambivalent we are "of two minds."
In the classroom we are most often torn between discipline and instruction.*

always, the ambivalence is between *discipline* and *instruction*. When we are helping a student and look up to see some mild disruption on the far side of the room, part of us wants to continue with *instruction* while part of us knows that we should deal with the *discipline* problem instead.

As a result, teachers are very vulnerable to sending mixed messages at the very moment in which they need to be clear, unequivocal, and convincing. The outcome will be continued testing by the disruptive students.

Nowhere To Hide

Children Read Us Like a Book

Body language is a constant in our make-up. It has not changed in a million years. Nor, can you change it by an act of will.

In a classroom the students study *you*, and they become more astute with each passing day. At any moment they will know whether or not they need to take you *seriously*. They will know *exactly* what they can get away with and *exactly* how far they can push you.

Do not ever think that you can fool a child. The language of the body does not lie. A skilled athlete might be able to fake going right or left, but you cannot *fake out* an entire classroom full of children hour after hour with something as complex as Meaning Business.

You have two choices concerning body language. You can learn about body language in order to help you man-

age the classroom. Or you can be ignorant of it, in which case the students will always be one step ahead of you.

Learning a Language

We are learning a new language. Eventually we will learn enough of the language to express ourselves effectively. Body language is, after all, a *conversation*.

We participate in this conversation either knowingly or unknowingly. Our objective is to be *knowing* participants.

We will begin to learn this new language as one would learn any new language – with simple words. Then we will move to phrases, then sentences, then paragraphs.

Worst-Case Scenarios

At the beginning, pieces of body language look like techniques. We ask ourselves, “Is this the answer?” “Is this going to stop kids from goofing off in my classroom?”


When new learning confronts old habits, our defenses go on alert. We tend to confront change before we embrace it.

We often fend off change with the “Yeah, buts.” These *Yeah, buts* typically take the form of worst-case scenarios.

“Yeah, but I have a kid in my class who would...”

“Yeah, but I’ve tried things like that and...”

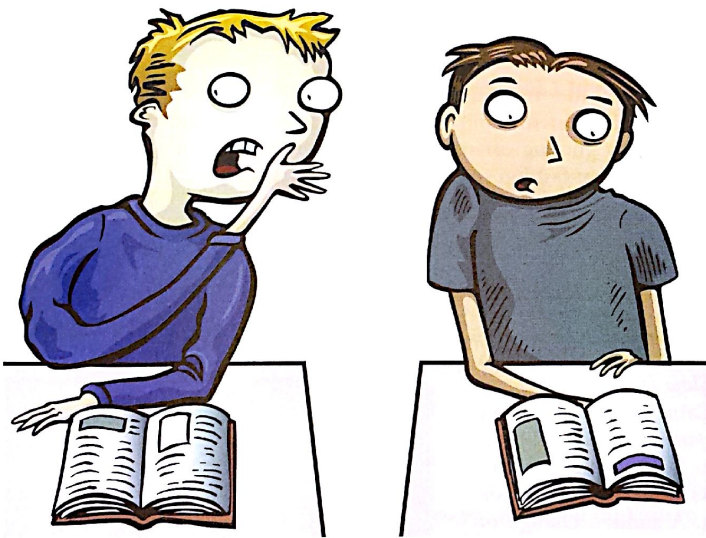
“Yeah, but you don’t know the kinds of homes our kids come from...”



Mixed messages
represent the
body language
of ambivalence.

Let me reiterate that we are learning a *language*, not a series of packaged remedies for classroom problems. We will learn to be an effective player in a game that never ends.

We will use a *typical* situation, talking to neighbors, between two *typical* students to paint a picture of a *typical* conversation in body language. The only thing remarkable about this situation is the fact that it accounts for 80 percent of the lost learning time in the classroom. For that reason alone, this unremarkable situation is pivotal.



The only thing remarkable about talking to neighbors is the fact that it accounts for 80 percent of the lost learning time.

Miss Haines and Larry – A Preview

Larry Acts Up

Miss Haines was my fifth grade teacher. She was young and pretty, and most of the guys had a crush on her, although nobody would admit it. She was also sweet and kind. But she was nobody's fool.

Larry was in that class. I'm sure you remember Larry from previous chapters – the student who will age you three years in one. I went all through school with Larry. I can still see him in my mind's eye.

One day Miss Haines was called to the office unexpectedly, and the class was left unattended. Larry, seeing that the coast was clear, began to show off.

The longer Miss Haines was gone, the more outrageous his showing off became. Miss Haines seemed to be gone forever. Finally, Larry was standing on Miss Haines desk doing a dance.

Suddenly from down the hall came the clip, clip, clip of high heels. Larry was down off that desk in a heartbeat! By the time Miss Haines appeared in the doorway we were all in our seats with hands folded. Miss Haines could mean business from down the hall.

Miss Haines Deals with Larry

One day Miss Haines was describing something to the class in an animated fashion when she caught Larry goofing off out of the corner of her eye. In mid-sentence Mrs. Haines stopped dead and slowly turned her head toward Larry as though to say,

"I beg your pardon."

Complete silence descended upon the class. All eyes turned to Larry whose face seemed to say, *Whoops*. As Mrs. Haines waited, Larry came around in his chair, faced for-

ward and looked very sheepish. After a pause, Mrs. Haines turned to the class and continued as though nothing had happened.

Miss Haines nailed Larry in mid-sentence with no upset whatsoever. Miss Haines had *finesse*. She was one of the only teachers I had in elementary school who did not want to kill Larry by the end of the year.

Keeping It Cheap

Looking Students Back to Work

Have you ever turned toward disruptive students and simply *looked* them back to work like Miss Haines? Most teachers will answer, "Yes."

It is not as though Meaning Business was just invented, and it is not as though you have never done it. When you have gotten a result like this, chances are you did a pretty good job of Meaning Business.

On the other hand, have you ever had to *walk* over to the disruptive students in order to get them to "shape up?" Most teachers will again respond, "Yes."

Now, let me ask you the *practical* question. Which one was *cheaper*? Obviously, the trip across the room was very expensive while "the look" was very cheap.

Focusing on "The Turn"

Considerations of *cost* focus our attention on the *beginning* of your interaction with the disruptive students – on the *turn*. If the turn is utterly convincing, the students will usually "cool it" and save you the trip across the classroom. If the turn is not convincing, you will have a much more complicated situation to manage.

In order to analyze the body language of Meaning Business as we turn toward the disruptive students, we must see the action in *slow motion*. Body language is subtle.

By the time you have turned toward the students, the game is usually over.

The following sections will deal with *the key discriminative stimuli for Meaning Business* as we turn toward the disruptive students. These are the signals students read in your body language that tell them whether or not they need to take you seriously.

Stop and Relax

Discipline on the Front Burner

You know from the previous chapter that when you see the problem, you have to immediately stop what you are doing in order to *commit*. If you fail to respond, you signal that instruction is on the *front* burner and discipline is on the *back* burner.

Sometimes the transition is sudden. Miss Haines stopped "dead" in the middle of a sentence when she caught Larry goofing off out of the corner of her eye. Stopping in that fashion said to the entire class,

"This lesson will *not* continue until *that* behavior stops."

A hush fell over the class because we all knew what that body language meant. We knew that Miss Haines was in "discipline mode," and Larry was on the hot seat.

Slow Down

Calm is *slow*, and upset is *fast*. But instruction is also fast as we move and talk in an animated fashion. A sudden change of speed is the first cue that students pick up signalling a change in your priorities.

Taking You Seriously

Only when you commit your time and attention to the problem will the students begin to take you seriously.

For example, when we help a student our minds are *racing* . We are thinking about what the student knows, what the student needs, how we can best explain the concept, and what is going on in the rest of the class. When we look up and see a disruption, the fight-flight reflex *speeds us up even more* .

Everything is driving us through the transition from instruction to discipline *too fast* . The students see this speed of movement and conclude that we are impatient to return to instruction.

We need to practice coming to a dead stop. This clear discontinuity of motion signals a change of mind on your part.

Hit the "Relax Button"

Miss Haines not only stopped in mid-sentence, but she also hit her "relax button" so fast that her entire mood changed. The weather in the room was transformed. The whole class came to attention.

Like Miss Haines, your response to disruption will be the *opposite* of a fight-flight reflex. Instead of revving up, you will shut down. This sudden transition provides an unmistakable discriminative stimulus to the students that *everything has changed* . You are in "discipline mode."

You must practice until you get good at it. When you get as good as Miss Haines, you will be able to transition quickly and effortlessly. But at the beginning we will slow things down.

Excuse Yourself from Robert

To slow things down, let's imagine that you are helping a well-behaved student, Robert, when you look up to see two students goofing off on the far side of the room. In this situation you don't need to switch from instruction to discipline as dramatically as Miss Haines did. Rather, you can take a moment as you excuse yourself from Robert to relax and refocus.

Lean over and whisper, "Excuse me, Robert." Then *stay down* and take *another* relaxing breath. When you stay down to take that second relaxing breath, you do several things at once:

- **You turn away from the problem.** Since the problem triggers the fight-flight reflex, getting the problem out of your field of vision eliminates the trigger. This helps you relax.
- **You model common courtesy.** It is important to model *common courtesy* whenever possible in the classroom. It is something that many students need to learn. Besides, if you don't excuse yourself, poor Robert has no idea as to why you suddenly quit talking to him and turned your back.
- **You give yourself time to refocus.** Give yourself a moment to center yourself before you stand up. When you stand and turn toward the disruptive students, it is "show time." You might get some smart-mouth before you even come around.
"What? I wasn't doing anything."
If you are not relaxed before this happens, you don't stand a chance.
- **You breathe in.** If you excuse yourself from Robert and immediately stand up, your lungs will be *empty* because you just spoke. Then you will be forced to *breathe in* as you face the disruptors. When you breathe in, you *flex* your diaphragm. You will not be able to relax peripheral muscles while flexing the most centrally located voluntary muscle in your body.

Turn in a Regal Fashion

The Six Second Turn

During training, as an advance organizer, I demonstrate two different turns. Then I ask the group to choose which one means business more.

Section Six: Learning To Mean Business

- **The First Turn:** The first turn takes *three* seconds. I begin by leaning down slowly to say, "Excuse me, Robert." Then (imagining a fluid motion):

A thousand and one: I straighten up.

A thousand and two: I point one foot toward the disruptive students and bring my body half-way around.

A thousand and three: I bring my other foot around to complete the turn as I square up to the disruptive students.

After I have completed this turn, the trainees typically look at me as though to say, "Okay, big deal. Let's see the next one."

- **The Second Turn:** The second turn takes *six* seconds. I begin in the same way by leaning down slowly in order to say, "Excuse me, Robert." Then:

A thousand and one: I stay down and breathe in gently.

A thousand and two: I begin to straighten up (about halfway) as I look toward the disruptive students.

A thousand and three: I finish straightening up as I continue looking at the disruptive students.

A thousand and four: I slowly rotate my shoulders and waist toward the disruptive students.

A thousand and five: I point one foot toward the disruptive students as my hips come around.

A thousand and six: I bring my other foot around to complete the turn as I square up to the disruptive students.

As I am turning in this fashion, there is almost always a sprinkling of nervous laughter from the group. By the end of the turn the teacher who volunteered to be my "target" is often holding up his or her hands saying, "Okay, okay, that's enough."

Speed Kills

What is the difference between Meaning Business and *not* Meaning Business when you turn toward two disruptive students in the classroom? *Speed*, of course. *Three seconds* to be exact.

What's the difference?

The difference between Meaning Business and *not* Meaning Business when you turn toward two disruptive students in the classroom is about three seconds!

As a means of creating some additional visual imagery to accompany the turn, I have the trainees picture Queen Victoria, the regent of the empire upon which the sun never sets. Then I ask, "Which of these two turns would be right for Queen Victoria?" I repeat the two turns.

The group is unanimous since the slow turn is so clearly "regal" while the faster turn is so utterly ordinary. Consequently, my prompt when we practice turning toward the disruptive students is, "Turn in a *regal* fashion."

Turn from the Top Down

A three-second turn is a normal turn. A six-second turn is something you have to practice. It is unnatural.

Normally when you turn, you turn your entire body at once. You lift your foot and turn in a single motion.

Try doing it this with a six-second turn and see what happens. After you lift your foot, you still have five seconds to go. You will fall flat on your face.

When a drama coach trains an actor to turn with a regal bearing, there is a set routine. You turn from the *top down* in four parts:

- Head
- Shoulders
- Waist
- Feet

This not only slows you down, but it also keeps you balanced until the turn is completed. If you do not turn in this fashion, you will be forced to speed up. You will end up with a very ordinary and unconvincing three-second turn.

When you slow down in order to turn in a regal fashion, you discover an additional dividend. You have plenty of time to observe the students and to think, and the students have plenty of time to read your meaning.

Often, when you slowly turn your head to look at the students, they catch your “drift” and “shape up” before you have to turn the rest of your body. That’s how Larry responded to Miss Haines. The less work for you, the better.

Point Your Toes

The Full Turn

Next during training, I model two additional variations of the turn. Both are done at the proper speed. In both I turn from the top down. The difference is in the *feet*.

The *first* turn is a *partial* turn. Imagine that I am turning toward disruptive students to my *right*. I slowly stand and turn my head, shoulders and waist toward the disruptive students. However, when it gets to my feet, I only pick up my right foot and point it toward the students. I leave my left foot planted as I complete the turn from the waist up.

The *second* turn is a *complete* turn. I do the same turn as before, but I also bring my left foot around so that *both* feet are pointed squarely toward the disruptive students.

Once again, there is no doubt among the trainees as to which turn means business more. A partial turn is a classic example of a *tentative gesture*. Tentative gestures bring us back to the topic of *ambivalence* and *mixed messages*.

Are you *really* finished with instruction mentally and emotionally so that you can commit yourself fully to dealing with the discipline problem? It is easy to say yes, but the body does not lie.

One Foot In and One Foot Out

In a partial turn your feet are only halfway around. During training, I will relax in this half-turned position and say, “Looking just at my body, predict which way I will move next; to the right (toward discipline) or to the left (toward instruction).” Of course, the group cannot predict. It is a 50/50 call.

Next, I remind the group that there will be a half-dozen students in any classroom who will *have to* test you in order to find out whether or not you will commit to problems like this. After all, they need to know the price of doing business, don’t they?

We have been reading each other’s body language for eons. Not too surprisingly, we have many common expressions that refer to the body language of commitment. Here is a figure of speech referring to ambivalence that is particularly relevant to the present discussion.

“Well, he has one foot in and one foot out. I wish he would make up his mind!”

With a partial turn, teachers become a living embodiment of this old expression. They literally have one foot in instruction and one foot in discipline. You might say that they are, “riding the fence” or “neither here nor there.”



*With a partial turn, the teacher has
"one foot in and one foot out."*

With a complete turn, teachers resolve any ambiguity concerning their commitment. They then embody this old expression:

"It is time to face up to the situation."

In sports terms, your body *telegraphs* your next move. As you can see, it also telegraphs tentativeness. It signals any *ambivalence* you might have toward dealing with the problem.

Nagging Signals No Commitment

Nagging is the opposite of commitment. It is a "cheap shot" at discipline management when discipline is not worth your time. That lack of commitment is signaled with every part of the body. Look at the teacher's feet during "snap and snarl." They stay planted. Pheasant posturing involves only the hands and the mouth.

Make it a rule in your classroom *never* to use a partial turn when dealing with a discipline problem. If you do, your tentativeness will force you to deal with the same problem again very soon.

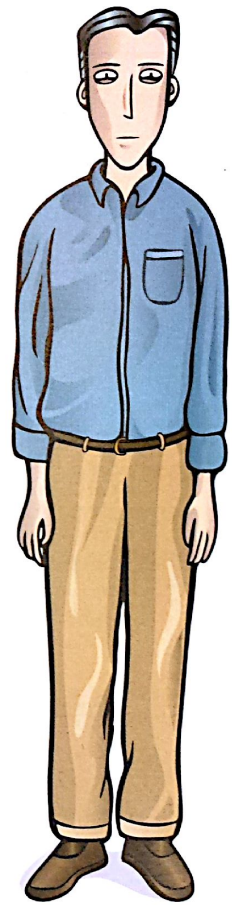
Get a Focal Point

Good Eye Contact

Next during training, I model two additional variations of the turn. These two variations are differentiated only by the degree of eye contact with the disruptive students.

During the first turn, my eyes glance around the room at other students. My head does not move – only my eyeballs. And the glances are quick – nothing exaggerated. I am just "checking things out" in the rest of the room as I turn.

During the second turn, I make fixed eye contact with one of the disruptive students throughout my standing



*With a complete turn, the teacher has
"faced up to the situation."*

and turning. There is no doubt among those trainees in my line of vision as to which turn is more convincing.

Furtive Eye Contact

Have you ever talked to someone who wouldn't look you in the eye? Typically, furtive eye movement is interpreted as anxiety. We might conclude that the other person is lying or is worried about something.

In the classroom, such body language usually means that the teacher is worrying about the rest of the classroom while attempting to deal with the disruptive student. The teacher's attention is *split*.

The resulting fragmentation of eye contact undermines the perception by the student of cool, calm commitment on the part of the teacher. The disruptive student usually just looks at the teacher impassively as though to say, "What?" Sometimes the student actually says it out loud.

With good eye contact there is a tension between the teacher and the student that builds with each passing second. This tension represents an *expectancy* on the part of the teacher. The student understands this expectancy perfectly well – *get back to work*.

When the tension builds to the point where it finally dawns on the student that the teacher is thoroughly committed and is *not* going away, the student typically breaks off eye contact and gets back to work. As usual, by *clearly* signalling commitment, teachers can save themselves a trip across the classroom.

Hands Down

Relax Your Upper Body

When you flex your bicep, you raise your forearm. If you are sick and tired, your hands usually end up on your hips or folded across your chest. Therefore, if you gesture with your hands while agitated, your gestures will typically

be waist-high. You have to "go ballistic" before your hand gestures become shoulder-high.

If you relax your upper body, your hands will be *down* at your side. However, many people feel awkward with their hands just "dangling." You need to have a plan, or those hands will be on the hips before you know it.

Get Comfortable

You could put them in your pockets, of course. This is a relaxed-looking gesture. For women, however, many items of clothing, such as pleated skirts, lack pockets. Pick a gesture that will be constant and predictable rather than one that must be altered depending on your dress for the day.

There are some advantages to simply putting your hands behind your back.

- *First*, this is a semiformal posture rather than a casual posture and, therefore, more in keeping with setting limits on disruptive students.
- *Second*, you turn your palms away from your clothing which reduces cleaning bills due to chalk dust and paint.
- *Finally*, the students cannot see your arms. This is particularly helpful in the beginning when you are still learning to relax since the last vestige of nervousness is usually some fidgeting with the fingers.

Jaw Relaxed

Check Your Jaw

As the final step in a regal turn, I will give the prompt, "Check your jaw." Setting our jaw or clenching our teeth is one of the most predictable signs of tension in the body.

Nervous tension remains in the jaw muscles even after we think we have relaxed. Unfortunately, the students can see this signal from the other side of the gymnasium.

Not a Time To Smile

While some teachers will set their jaws while setting limits, others will *smile*. Sometimes this is a sign of ambivalence as the teacher is torn between "good guy" and "bad guy" roles that have never been sorted out. This body language says, "*Please forgive me for Meaning Business.*"

But there is another trigger for smiling when our jaw should be relaxed. We often smile without knowing it because the disruptive students *cause us to smile*.

Trigger Mechanisms

Smiling is what biologists call a "trigger mechanism." When a person smiles at us, it triggers our smiling back. It is part of parent/child nurturing. Smiling also serves as a submission signal. In social situations a slight smile or submission signal shows that we are friendly. This facial expression is referred to as "greeting behavior."

When we catch students goofing off, they typically look up and give us *smiley face* – that ingratiating mixture of surprise and feigned innocence that all children use to "get off the hook." "Smiley face" tends to trigger a mild inadvertent smile from us in response.

You may not feel this gentle smile. It is just a softening of the face around the mouth and eyes that says, "I am your friend, and everything is okay."

The last thing you want to do while attempting to mean business is to signal to the students that everything is *okay*. Rather than shaping up, they *relax*.

We Are Not Amused

This brings us to a well known story about Queen Victoria, our model for *regal* behavior. As the story goes, someone at the royal dinner table told a slightly off-color joke. Since Queen Victoria had little patience for such humor, she looked impassively at the would-be-comedian as the table fell silent. Then she coldly stated to the offending guest the immortal words, "*We are not amused.*" That was the "Royal We," of course.

You would do well to think of yourself as Queen Victoria when attempting to mean business. *Relax* your jaw. This is no time to give tacit approval to misbehavior with a slight smile. Nor, does upset serve any constructive purpose. As students go through their little antics to get off the hook; relax, wait, and give them your best Queen Victoria look that says, "*We are not amused.*"



"We are not amused."

*When you are relaxed,
you have no facial expression at all.*

ior with a slight smile. Nor, does upset serve any constructive purpose. As students go through their little antics to get off the hook; relax, wait, and give them your best Queen Victoria look that says, "*We are not amused.*"

Only when the students realize that their antics are getting them nowhere will they consider an alternative strategy. The alternative that you are waiting to see is well understood by the students – *get back to work*.

The Stages of “Cute”

As a footnote, you should know that “smiley face” is only the beginning of a *series* of ingratiating gestures that have gotten kids “off the hook” since time began. Here are the *three phases of cute*. Watch kids play them like a violin.

- Smiley face
- Raised eyebrows
- Head tilted to the side

Have you ever had students in your class who thought they could skate through life just by being cute? Obviously it works for them at home. You need to teach them that this game will *not* get the desired result in your classroom.

Commitment and Power

The Strength of Our Convictions

Calm is strength, but it is not the only form of power conveyed by you. Commitment is also power. We speak of people having “the strength of their convictions.”

During training teachers will often wrongly attribute the power that comes from commitment to irrelevant aspects of facial expression. Trainees will sometimes refer to the whole process as “staring them down.”

You convey *the strength of your convictions*, however, not by your facial expression but, rather, by the *totality* of your body language. Having committed, you simply relax and wait to see what choice the students make. They will do one of two things. They will either get back to work, or they will not. You will know soon enough.

Power and Passivity

“Staring them down” represents the *active* voice – the language of confrontation. Meaning Business is done in the *passive* voice – the language of calm commitment.

However, the fight-flight reflex has a voice of its own that shouts into your ear, “You can’t just stand there! *Do something!*” Teachers often struggle with this inner voice. If your thoughts are adversarial or your feelings agitated, your body language will show it.

Practice Makes Perfect

Body language can only be mastered through practice. The main limitation of a book as opposed to a workshop is its inability to build skills through practice. Nowhere is this difference greater than in learning the body language of Meaning Business.

The **Study Group Activity Guide** structures the same skill practice that you would receive at a workshop. The protocol for each practice exercise contains every prompt for Say, See, Do Teaching along with my “asides” and introductory remarks. You *can* have quality training at your school site that is affordable. The Study Group Activity Guide is a **free download** from www.fredjones.com.

Study Group Activity Guide Skill Building Exercises

Study Group Activity Guide appendices D, E, F, G, and H provide practice for the skills of Meaning Business and for troubleshooting extreme behavior problems.